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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **MEXICAN NATIONAL SENTENCED TO OVER 7 YEARS FOR HOSTAGE TAKING**

**TUCSON, Ariz.** –The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona, announced that on June 29, 2004, Sinforiano Sanchez-Valenzuela, DOB 1/9/53, of Ciudad Obregon, Sonora, Mexico, was sentenced to 87 months in prison by U.S. District Judge Frank R. Zapata in Tucson.

On September 6, 2002, Sanchez-Valenzuela, along with 48 other illegal aliens, was apprehended by U.S. Border Patrol agents at an illegal alien stash house located at 4002 South 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Tucson, Ariz. Sanchez-Valenzuela recorded the names of the illegal aliens in a ledger and assisted them in making phone calls to their friends or relatives to secure payment for their transportation to their final destination in the United States. Sanchez-Valenzuela admitted that the illegal aliens were forced to remain in the stash house until payment could be secured via Western Union for their transport from Tucson, and that he participated in keeping the illegal aliens at the stash house until they paid. Based on the ledgers found in the stash house and Western Union receipts, Sanchez-Valenzuela retrieved over \$130,000 as part of this hostage taking conspiracy.

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Sanchez-Valenzuela was one of eleven defendants originally charged in a 21-count indictment. On January 14, 2004, Sanchez-Valenzuela entered a plea of guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit hostage taking in violation of Title 18, U.S. Code, Section 1203. Conspiracy to commit hostage taking carries a maximum penalty of not more than life in custody and a \$250,000 fine.

The investigation in this case was conducted by Special Agents of the U.S. Border Patrol.

The prosecution was handled by Jeffrey H. Jacobson, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

CASE NUMBER: CR-03-0033 TUC-FRZ  
RELEASE NUMBER: 2004-120

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